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## ECA Update: February 7, 2017

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**Meeting the New Administration:  
Addressing Priorities and Securing Progress**

**[AGENDA AND LIST OF SPEAKERS NOW AVAILABLE](#)**

**February 23-24, 2017**  
The Liaison Capitol Hill Hotel  
415 New Jersey Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC

[Register today for the first national meeting with the new Administration](#) focusing on the DOE Offices of Environmental Management and Nuclear Energy, and the National Nuclear Security Administration. Hear from DOE officials, key Congressional staff, and other DC insiders.

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## GAO REPORTS

### **Benefits and Costs Should Be Better Understood Before DOE Commits to a Separate Repository for Defense Waste**

*U.S. GAO*

January 31, 2017

DOE planned for decades to store defense and commercial nuclear waste in a single repository in Yucca Mountain, Nevada. However, it terminated this plan in 2010 and, in 2015, the President accepted DOE's recommendation to develop separate repositories—one primarily for defense waste and another for commercial waste—citing various benefits, including cost efficiencies.

But we found that DOE's cost-benefit analysis of the two repositories was unreliable because it didn't account for billions of dollars in significant costs. We recommended that DOE redo its analysis to comprehensively assess the costs and benefits of having two repositories. [>>Continue reading](#)

### **Better Information Needed on Results of National Nuclear Security Administration's Research and Technology Development Projects**

*U.S. GAO*

February 3, 2017

NNSA manages research and technology development projects intended to help stop nuclear proliferation. What does it have to show for its \$1 billion investment on these projects in fiscal

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**February 2017**

**8-9**

**The Advanced Reactors  
Technical Summit IV &  
Technology Trailblazers  
Showcase**  
Argonne, IL

[More info here](#)

**February 2017**

**23-24**

**ECA Event:  
Meeting the New  
Administration: Addressing  
Priorities and Securing  
Progress**  
Washington, DC

[Register here](#)

years 2012–2015? There has been progress, but NNSA hasn't tracked or documented results consistently.

We looked at a sample of 91 projects. Of those, 88 had made technological progress by, for example, building instrument hardware. Of those, 33 were transitioned to users for further development or use, and 17 of those are currently in use. We recommended that NNSA consistently track and document its project results. [>>Continue reading](#)

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## LEGISLATIVE

### Can Nuclear Power Rise From The Chaos In Washington?

*Forbes*

February 5, 2017

In January, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the Advanced Nuclear Technology Act of 2017, HR 590, that is intended “to foster civilian research and development of advanced nuclear energy technologies and enhance the licensing and commercial deployment of such technologies.” The bill was sponsored by two Republicans and three Democrats and has now moved to Committee in the Senate, chaired by John Thune (R-SD).

At the same time, the latest version of the Interim Consolidated Storage Act was introduced in the House by Darrell Issa (R-CA) and Mike Conaway (R-TX). This bill would create one or more interim storage facilities to hold spent nuclear fuel (SNF) from all the nation’s nuclear power plants and would allow the Energy Department to contract for temporary used nuclear fuel storage facilities. The bill would allow the Department of Energy to use interest from the Nuclear Waste Fund to pay site contractors to store the used fuel in facilities approved by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission [>>Continue reading](#)

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### Senator Crapo: Furthering nuclear innovation benefits Idaho

*Idaho State Journal*

February 2, 2017

For the past three years, the Research and Business Development Center and the Idaho National Laboratory have worked together to quantify INL’s economic impact. The recent report on the lab’s economic contributions in Fiscal Year 2016 demonstrated the substantial benefits nuclear research brings to our great state. Removing roadblocks that prevent continued

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March 2017

5-9

**Waste Management  
Conference**  
Phoenix, AZ

[More info here](#)

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May/June 2017

31-1

INVITATION ONLY

**ECA Peer Exchange:  
Manhattan Project National  
Historical Park  
Implementation**  
Richland, WA

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September 2017

13-14

**2017 National Cleanup  
Workshop**  
Alexandria, VA

[More info here](#)

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innovation in the nuclear sector so that our state can continue to benefit from INL's great work is important. [>>Continue reading](#)

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## Nuclear waste storage moves ahead as Issa, others, seek to relocate it

*The San Diego Union-Tribune*

February 2, 2017

One San Diego County congressman is taking a high-profile stand against the prospect of parking tons of spent nuclear fuel on the Southern California beachfront for decades to come.

Rep. Darrell Issa, R-Vista, whose district includes the shuttered plant, introduced a bill earlier this month aimed at relocating the nuclear waste from San Onofre, where more than 8 million people live within 50 miles.

"It's just located on the edge of an ocean and one of the busiest highways in America," Issa said of the plant, which is now being decommissioned. "We'll be paying for storage for decades and decades if we don't find a solution. And that will be added to your electricity bill." [>>Continue reading](#)

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## Franken introduces bill to help nuclear cleanup veterans

*Brainerd Dispatch*

February 3, 2017

U.S. Sen. Al Franken, D-Minn., and Congresswoman Grace Meng, D-N.Y., have introduced a bill to give health care benefits to "Atomic Veterans" exposed to high levels of harmful radiation when assigned to clean up nuclear testing sites during the late 1970s.

The Mark Takai Atomic Veterans Healthcare Parity Act—named after the late Congressman Mark Takai of Hawaii—would designate veterans who participated in the nuclear cleanup of Enewetak Atoll on the Marshall Islands as "radiation-exposed veterans," and make them eligible to receive the same healthcare and benefits given to other service members who were involved in active nuclear tests, a news release from Franken's office said. [>>Continue reading](#)

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## NEW NUCLEAR

Small nuclear power plants may be a boon for Utah energy and clean air needs

Find the most recent *ECA*  
*Bulletin* [here](#)

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*Deseret News*

February 4, 2017

Environmentalists and energy advocates alike should welcome innovations to nuclear power that could potentially help diversify and enhance Utah's energy ecosystem.

We call attention to a development taking place in southeast Idaho, which is the proposed location for a new design of a modular nuclear power plant. The plant is being championed by a group called NuScale Technology, and it could provide the template for nuclear power that is both safer and cheaper than existing plants. What's more, it generates energy that is far cleaner than fossil fuels and produces essentially no carbon emissions whatsoever. [>>Continue reading](#)

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## How to Build a Nuclear Power Plant

*The Economist*

January 28, 2017

The Barakah nuclear-power plant under construction in Abu Dhabi will never attract the attention that the Burj Khalifa skyscraper in neighbouring Dubai does, but it is an engineering feat nonetheless. It is using three times as much concrete as the world's tallest building, and six times the amount of steel. Remarkably, its first reactor may start producing energy in the first half of this year—on schedule and (its South Korean developers insist) on budget. That would be a towering achievement.

In much of the world, building a nuclear-power plant looks like a terrible business prospect. Two recent additions to the world's nuclear fleet, in Argentina and America, took 33 and 44 years to erect. Of 55 plants under construction, the Global Nuclear Power database reckons almost two-thirds are behind schedule (see chart). The delays lift costs, and make nuclear less competitive with other sources of electricity, such as gas, coal and renewables. [>>Continue reading](#)